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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: KMT CHAIRMAN MA'S JAPAN TRIP, MIDDLE EAST

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their coverage July 20 on Vice Minister of Interior Yen Wan-chin, who with five other officials was taken into custody Wednesday on suspicion that of taking kickbacks in a cable car construction project; First Lady Wu Shu-chen's alleged involvement in the Presidential Office's allowance for state affairs; a Taipei-bound China Airlines flight from Ho Chi Minh City which was forced to land in Kaohsiung Thursday after an Vietnamese-American passenger allegedly broke a window and attacked flight attendants; and the results of this year's island-wide university entrance exams. All three English-language papers front-paged the launch of direct cargo charter flights from Taiwan to China Thursday, while the Chinese-language papers gave very limited coverage to the news.

12. In terms of editorials and commentaries, KMT Spokeswoman Cheng Li-wen opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" how the KMT exchanged views with high-ranking Japanese officials during KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou's recent trip to Japan. Cheng said the Japanese officials showed support and respect for the KMT's pragmatic attitude toward cross-Straits relations and its East Asian security policy. An editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times," however, said Ma had an embarrassing experience when meeting with Japanese Diet members, as they are concerned about the KMT's cross-Straits policy. With regard to the Middle East, an editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" urged the U.S. to play a more active role in making Israel and Lebanon restrain themselves. An editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News," however, said it disagreed with the U.S. view that Israel should be given some time to pound Hezbollah targets and that Hezbollah should be "rubbed out." End summary.

13. KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou's Trip to Japan

A) "Sharing Ma Ying-jeou's Experience Gained from His Japan Tour"

KMT Spokeswoman Cheng Li-wen opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 500,000] (7/20):

"... Judged from our meetings with Japanese political leaders, it seemed very clear that the Japanese government's position is quite different from what the DPP perceives. First, the DPP leadership has emphasized the importance of Taiwan's participation in the U.S.-Japan military alliance. But the DPP's real purpose is to use such a move to continue playing the 'Taiwan independence card,' which does not tally with the strategic goal of the U.S.-Japan alliance at all. The DPP and the pro-independence activists have been unwilling to face an important international political fact - that is, given the strong demand by all parties involved for the maintenance of the status quo and stability across the Taiwan

Strait, it is unlikely that they will support or cover up for Taiwan independence. In fact, the Japanese authorities very clearly expressed their doubts about Taiwan independence, because it totally violates Japan's wish for cross-Strait peace.

"Second, the DPP authorities' wishful thinking is that Japan does not hope to see Taiwan develop a sound relationship with mainland China because it will threaten Japan's interests. But both Japan and the United States have directly expressed that they are happy to see both sides of the Taiwan Strait improve relations under the premise that the cross-Strait status quo is maintained.

"Third, the DPP has deliberately tried to create the impression that the Japanese government and the KMT lack mutual trust; it has even repeatedly claimed that the KMT is 'anti-Japan' and a 'Japan-hater.'

In order to seek Japan's support for Taiwan independence, the DPP even tried its best to flatter the Japanese right wing. ... But such an attitude of deliberate flattery actually stunned the Japanese authorities. In comparison, Japanese officials expressed a certain degree of support and respect for the KMT's pragmatic attitude towards cross-Strait relations and its East Asian security policy. ..."

#### B) "Japan, Ma Ying-jeou and Reality"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (7/20):

"... This negative view among Japanese lawmakers was palpable during last week's trip by KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou to Japan, especially during an uncomfortable forum last week in which members of the Diet grilled Ma about his party's policies. ... All of Ma's fevered dissembling could do nothing to change the realities of regional politics when he was in Tokyo last week, and a few carefully tweaked e-mails sent to members of the Japanese Diet will do nothing to change those realities this week. Japan should be concerned about the KMT's intentions. Tokyo has every right to be concerned about how closely into Beijing's orbit Ma will bring Taiwan if he is elected president. So, for that matter, do the people of Taiwan. ... Ma will need to do more to reassure the Japanese - and all Taiwanese who cherish their liberty - that this country's future is not tied to the whims of the autocrats in Beijing. ..."

#### 4. Middle East

##### A) "Brokering a Lasting Peace in Lebanon"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (7/20):

"... The differences between the two warring countries should be worked out as soon as possible to halt the killing and suffering the war is causing. Parties such as the United States, France and the United Nations should work promptly together to broker a cease-fire.

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni said a cease-fire is impossible unless the soldiers captured by Hezbollah are released. Washington has also urged that the Israeli soldiers held hostage be released. The U.S.'s call is valid and deserves to be supported. However, many lives and stability in the region depend on the restoration of peace. The U.S. should play a more active role in making the warring parties restrain themselves."

##### B) "Peace Is First Priority in Lebanon"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (7/20):

"... The first priority must, however, be the restoration of peace. We therefore add our voice in opposition to the notion, backed by the United States administration of President George W. Bush, that the IDF [i.e. Israeli Defense Forces] should be 'given some time,' perhaps weeks, to pound 'Hezbollah targets' and other residential areas and road and ports throughout Lebanon before allowing the United Nations or other combination of international forces to set up a buffer zone. This position does not imply any endorsement of the rocket attacks by the Hezbollah military wing, but it is clear that the Israeli government has launched an offensive on the entire economy and social structure of Lebanon in over reaction to the

attack by one political and military group, whoever influential.

"We also do not agree with the expressed intention by some U.S. officials that Hezbollah, whose political wing is a legal political party in Lebanon, should be 'rubbed out.' What is legitimate is that armed factions in Lebanon should in principle disarm in order to protect the peace and security of citizens in Lebanon as well as Israel, but such disarmament should be negotiated and not promoted by an offensive against the entire country of Lebanon, a method which will only exacerbate tensions instead of improving security and at the cost of even more Lebanese and Israeli lives. ..."

YOUNG